

What's Your Recipe?

***Green Alternative Recipes for Household
Cleaning, Maintenance, & Personal Care***



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Common Household Items

These items can be used to clean and maintain your home and provide for personal care. Using these items will save you money, space, and create less waste from the purchase of unnecessary supplies, and reduce the unnatural chemicals that we are putting into the environment.

Ammonia (All purpose Cleaner)

Borax (Laundry Detergent)

Baking Soda

Castile Soap (Castile Soap is soap that is made from vegetable oil)

Cornstarch

Cream of Tarter

Essential Oils (for scents) – Also known as aromatherapy oils.

Hydrogen Peroxide

Lemon (Juice, whole, rind)

Olive Oil

Rubbing Alcohol

Salt

Tea Tree Oil (most grocery stores carry small bottles of the oil)

White Vinegar

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Lesson Plan for Testing the Alternatives

What’s Your Recipe?

from Pollution Solutions: Litter Prevention Activities for Virginia Teachers

Using the scientific method, students will develop and test a combination of baking soda and salt and then compare its ability to that of a commercial cleanser.

For additional litter prevention, recycling and waste reduction lessons, check out *Pollution Solutions* at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/education/polsol.html>.

Household Cleaning and Maintenance

All Purpose Scrubbing Cleaners

All-Purpose Cleaner # 1

suggested uses: hard surfaces like countertops and kitchen floors, windows and mirrors

2 cups white distilled vinegar
2 cups water
20-30 or more drops of essential oil (optional)

Tip: Warming in microwave until barely hot will boost cleaning power for tough jobs. Only microwave in a glass container.

All-Purpose Cleaner # 2

1/2 cup vinegar
1/4 cup baking soda (or 2 teaspoons borax)

Mix the vinegar and baking soda into 1/2 gallon (2 liters) water. Store and keep. Use for removal of water deposit stains on shower stall panels, bathroom chrome fixtures, windows, bathroom mirrors, etc.

Another alternative is microfiber cloths which lift off dirt, grease and dust without the need for cleaning chemicals, because they are formulated to penetrate and trap dirt. There are a number of different brands. A good quality cloth can last for several years.

Creamy Soft Scrub # 1

suggested uses: Use this creamy soft scrub on kitchen counters, stoves, bathroom sinks, etc.

2 cups baking soda
1/2 cup liquid castile soap
4 teaspoons vegetable glycerin (acts as a preservative)
5 drops antibacterial essential oil such as lavender, tea tree, rosemary or any scent you prefer (optional)

Mix together and store in a sealed glass jar, shelf life of 2 years.

Tips: For exceptionally tough jobs spray with vinegar first—full strength or diluted, scented—let sit and follow with scrub.

Dry soft scrubs can be made with baking soda or salt (or combination of both) with 10-15 drops essential oil to scent

*Use a liquid castile soap that does not contain sodium lauryl (laureth) sulfate (SLS) or Diethanolamine (DEA), which may have harmful side effects.

Creamy Soft Scrub # 2

Pour about 1/2 cup of baking soda into a bowl, and add enough liquid detergent to make a texture like frosting. Scoop the mixture onto a sponge, and wash the surface. This is the perfect recipe for cleaning the bathtub because it rinses easily and doesn't leave grit.

Tip: Add 1 teaspoon of vegetable glycerin to the mixture and store in a sealed glass jar, to keep the product moist. Otherwise just make as much as you need at a time.

All Purpose Spray Cleaners

All Purpose Spray Cleaner # 1

Mix in a sprayer bottle:

1 cup white vinegar
1 cup water

In the kitchen, use vinegar-and-water spray to clean countertops, lightly soiled range surfaces and backsplash areas.

In the bathroom, use vinegar spray cleaner to clean countertops, floors, and exterior surfaces of the toilet. For really tough bathroom surfaces such as shower walls, pump up the cleaning power by removing the sprayer element and heating the solution in the microwave until barely hot. Spray shower walls with the warmed generously, allow to stand for 10 to 15 minutes, then scrub and rinse. The heat helps soften stubborn soap scum and loosens hard water deposits.

All Purpose Spray Cleaner # 2

1/2 teaspoon baking soda
A dab of liquid soap
2 cups hot tap water

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle and shake until the baking soda has dissolved. Apply and wipe off with a sponge or rag.

Chopping Block Cleaners

Lemon or Lemon Juice

Rub a slice of lemon across a chopping block to disinfect the surface. For tougher stains, squeeze some of the lemon juice onto the spot and let sit for 10 minutes, then wipe.

Deodorizers

1. Baking soda or vinegar with lemon juice in small dishes absorbs odors around the house.
2. Having houseplants helps reduce odors in the home.
3. Prevent cooking odors by simmering vinegar (1 tbsp in 1 cup water) on the stove while cooking.
4. To get such smells as fish and onion off utensils and cutting boards, wipe them with vinegar and wash in soapy water.
5. Keep fresh coffee grounds on the counter.
6. Grind up a slice of lemon in the garbage disposal.
7. Simmer water and cinnamon or other spices on stove.
8. Place bowls of fragrant dried herbs and flowers in room.
9. In-sink garbage disposal units - grind up lemon or orange peel in the unit.
10. Carpets - sprinkle baking soda several hours before vacuuming
11. Garage, basements - set a sliced onion on a plate in center of room for 12 - 24 hours

Carpet Freshener

3/4 cup baking soda
2 tbsp corn starch
1/4 cup perfumed talcum powder

Combine the above ingredients. Sprinkle on dry carpet, let stand 5 to 15 minutes, and then vacuum.

Room Spray

Water to fill about 3/4 of a bottle
Essential Oils to desired strength of scent
1 Tablespoon of plain castile Soap

Combine ingredients and shake well before spraying.

Disinfectant

2 teaspoons borax
4 tablespoons vinegar
3 cups hot water.
1/4 teaspoon liquid castile soap

Combine ingredients. Wipe on with dampened cloth or use non-aerosol spray bottle. (This is not an antibacterial formula. The average kitchen or bathroom does not require antibacterial cleaners.)

To disinfect kitchen sponges, put them in the dishwasher when running a load.

Dishwashers

Cleaning the Scum out of the Dishwasher

1 cup of white vinegar
Baking Soda

Use vinegar to clean out soap scum in dishwasher: Fill a cup with white vinegar, place on top rack, and run dishwasher with full hot cycle. Dishwasher should be empty except for cup of vinegar. For extra cleaning power, sprinkle baking soda on bottom of dishwasher and run with the cup of vinegar. Of course, stains and yucky crusty food need to be cleaned out by hand.

Dishwashing Liquid

¼ cup soap flakes
1 ½ cups hot water
¼ cup glycerin
½ teaspoon lemon oil
1 clean 16-ounce squirt bottle

Grate the soap flakes. Put the soap flakes into hot water and stir with a fork until most of the soap has dissolved. Let the solution cool for 5 minutes. Stir in the glycerin and lemon oil. Use 2 to 3 teaspoons per sink or dishpan of hot water to clean dishes.

Dishwashing by Hand

Add 2 heaping tablespoons baking soda (along with your regular dish detergent) to the dish water to help cut grease and foods left on dishes, pots and pans. For cooked-on foods, let them soak in the baking soda and detergent with water first, then use dry baking soda on a clean damp sponge or cloth as a scratchless scouring powder.

Drain Opener

1/2 cup baking soda
1/2 cup vinegar

Pour baking soda down the drain and follow with vinegar. Cover and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Flush with boiling water.

Tip: Prevent your shower from clogging by using a drain trap to catch hairs.

Floor Cleaners

Most floor surfaces can be easily cleaned using a solution of vinegar and water. For damp-mopping wood floors: mix equal amounts of white distilled vinegar and water. Add 15 drops of pure peppermint oil; shake to mix.

Remove dirt and grime (without unwanted scratch marks) from no wax and tile floors using 1/2 cup baking soda in a bucket of warm water-mop and rinse clean for a sparkling floor. For scuff marks, use baking soda on a clean damp sponge, then rinse.

Brick and Stone Tiles

1 cup white vinegar
1 gallon (4L) water

Mix the vinegar and water then rinse the floor with clear water.

Tub and Tile Cleaner

Baking Soda
Vinegar

For simple cleaning, rub in baking soda with a damp sponge and rinse with fresh water. For tougher jobs, wipe surfaces with vinegar first and follow with baking soda as a scouring powder. (Vinegar can break down tile grout, so use sparingly.)

Painted Wood

1 Teaspoon baking soda
1 gallon hot water

Wood

Vegetable Oil
Vinegar

Apply a thin coat of 1:1 vegetable oil and vinegar and rub in well.

Furniture Polish

For *varnished wood*, add a few drops of lemon oil into a 1/2 cup warm water. Mix well and spray onto a soft cotton cloth. Cloth should only be slightly damp. Wipe furniture with the cloth, and finish by wiping once more using a dry soft cotton cloth.

For *unvarnished wood*, mix two tsps each of olive oil and lemon juice and apply a small amount to a soft cotton cloth. Wring the cloth to spread the mixture further into the material and apply to the furniture using wide strokes. This helps distribute the oil evenly.

Furniture Polish Recipe# 1

1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
20-30 drops lemon essential oil
(2 teaspoons lemon juice may be substituted for lemon oil but then must be stored in refrigerator)

Shake well before using.

Dip a clean, dry cloth into the polish and rub wood in the direction of the grain. Use a soft brush to work the polish into corners or tight places.

Tips: To remove water spots rub well with toothpaste. To remove scratches use 1 part lemon juice and 1 part oil, rub with soft cloth.

Furniture Polish Recipe # 2

Mix in a sprayer bottle:

1 cup olive oil

1/2 cup lemon juice

Shake well and apply a small amount to a flannel cleaning rag or cleaning cloth. Spread evenly over furniture surface. Turn cloth to a dry side and polish dry.

Glass and Windows

Homemade Glass Cleaner Recipe # 1

Mix in a sprayer bottle:

1 cup rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol

1 cup water

1 tablespoon white vinegar

Strong Glass Cleaner Recipe # 2

Mix in a sprayer bottle:

1 cup rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol

1 cup water

1 tablespoon clear, non-sudsing ammonia

Glass and Window Cleaner # 3

1/4-1/2 teaspoon liquid detergent

3 tablespoons vinegar

2 cups water

Spray bottle

Put all the ingredients into a spray bottle, shake it up a bit, and use as you would a commercial brand. The soap in this recipe is important. It cuts the wax residue from the commercial brands you might have used in the past.

Laundry

Give your laundry a boost by adding 1/2 cup of baking soda to your laundry to make liquid detergent work harder. A better balance of pH in the wash gets clothes cleaner, fresher, and brighter.

Laundry Detergent & Fabric Softener

1/2 cup soap flakes

1/2 cup baking soda

1/4 cup washing soda

1/4 cup Borax

Soap flakes can be made by grating your favorite pure vegetable soap with a cheese grater. Mix ingredients together and store in a glass container. Use 1 tablespoon per load (2 for heavily soiled laundry), wash in warm or cold water.

This standard recipe can be adjusted for soft water by using 1 cup soap flakes, 1/4 cup baking soda and 1/2 cup borax. For hard water, use 1 cup soap flakes, 1 cup baking soda, and 1 cup borax.

Note: Borax should not be ingested.

Tips: Add 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar to rinse as a fabric softener. For a whitener, use hydrogen peroxide rather than bleach. Soak your dingy white clothes for 30 minutes in the washer with 1/2 cup 20% peroxide. Launder as usual.

Static Cling Reduction

To reduce static cling, dampen your hands, then shake out your clothes as you remove them from the drier. Line-drying clothing is another alternative.

Metal Cleaners

Aluminum

Cream of tartar
Water

Use a soft cloth
Brass or Bronze

Lemon and baking-soda solution OR Vinegar and salt solution

Polish with a soft cloth

Chrome

Polish with baby oil, vinegar, or aluminum foil shiny side out.

Copper

1 tablespoon Salt OR Baking Soda OR Lemon wedge
1 cup White Vinegar Lemon Juice Salt
1 Pot of boiling water

Soak a cotton rag in a pot of boiling water with 1 tablespoon salt and 1 cup white vinegar. Apply to copper while hot; let cool, then wipe clean. For tougher jobs, sprinkle baking soda or lemon juice on a soft cloth, then wipe. For copper cookware, sprinkle a lemon wedge with salt, then scrub.

Gold

Toothpaste OR Salt
Vinegar
Flour

Rub with toothpaste or a paste made from salt, vinegar and flour.

Silver

Aluminum foil
Baking Soda
Salt
Pan
Water

Line a pan with aluminum foil and fill with water; add a teaspoon each of baking soda and salt. Bring to a boil and immerse silver. Polish with soft cloth.

Stainless Steel

White Vinegar or Olive Oil OR 4 tbs baking soda
1 qt water

Clean with a cloth dampened with undiluted white vinegar, or olive oil. For stainless cookware, mix 4 tbs baking soda in 1 qt water, and apply using a soft cloth. Wipe dry using a clean cloth.

Rust Remover

Lime (fruit)
Salt

Sprinkle a little salt on the rust, squeeze a lime over the salt until it is well soaked. Leave the mixture on for 2 - 3 hours.

Mold

Mold Treatment # 1

One part hydrogen peroxide
Two parts water

Mold in bathroom tile grout is a common problem and can be a health concern. Mix one part hydrogen peroxide (3%) with two parts water in a spray bottle and spray on areas with mold. Wait at least one hour before rinsing or using shower.

Mold Treatment # 2

2 teaspoons tea tree oil
2 cups water

Combine in a spray bottle, shake to blend, and spray on problem areas. Do not rinse. Makes two cups.

Vinegar Spray

Straight vinegar reportedly kills 82 percent of mold. Pour some white distilled vinegar straight into a spray bottle, spray on the moldy area, and let set without rinsing if you can put up with the smell. It will dissipate in a few hours.

Oven Cleaners

Oven Cleaner # 1

1/2 cup full-strength ammonia

Fill a small glass bowl with 1/2 cup full-strength ammonia, place in oven and close. Let stand overnight, then wipe loosened dirt with paper towels or newspapers. If necessary, rub surfaces with a suitable abrasive, such as fine steel wool, then wash with warm soapy water and rinse. Repeat process if necessary.

Oven Cleaner # 2

1 cup or more baking soda
Water
a squirt or two of liquid detergent

Sprinkle water generously over the bottom of the oven, then cover the grime with enough baking soda that the surface is totally white. Sprinkle some more water over the top. Let the mixture set overnight. You can easily wipe up the grease the next morning because the grime will have loosened. When you have cleaned up the worst of the mess, dab a bit of liquid detergent or soap on a sponge, and wash the remaining residue from the oven. If this recipe doesn't work for you it is probably because you didn't use enough baking soda and/or water.

Oven Cleaner # 3

3/4 cup Baking Soda

1 part Lemon Juice

Mix 1/4 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, pour into basin and let it set for a few minutes. Scrub with brush and rinse. A mixture of borax (2 parts) and lemon juice (one part) will also work.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner # 2

1/4 cup Borax
Pine Oil (Optional)

Put 1/4 cup borax in toilet bowl and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Swish with a toilet brush and then scrub. A few drops of pine oil can be added for increased disinfecting. (Note: some people are allergic to pine oil.)

Tip: Let ingredients soak for a while to make for easy scrubbing, especially on persistent stains like toilet bowl rings

Mothballs

The common mothball is made of paradichlorobenzene, which is harmful to liver and kidneys. Try using one of the following instead:

1. Cedar
2. Lavender
3. Rosemary
4. Rose Petals
5. Dried Lemon Peel

Cedar chips in a cheese cloth square cedar oil in an absorbent cloth will repel moths. The cedar should be 'aromatic cedar', also referred to as juniper in some areas. Cedar chips are available at many craft supply stores, or make your own using a plane and a block of cedar from the lumberyard. Homemade moth-repelling sachets can also be made with lavender, rosemary, and rose petals.

Dried lemon peels are also a natural moth deterrent - simply tosses into clothes chest, or tie in cheesecloth and hang in the closet.

Shoe Polish

Olive Oil
Lemon Juice

Olive oil with a few drops of lemon juice can be applied to shoes with a thick cotton or terry rag. Leave for a few minutes; wipe and buff with a clean, dry rag.

Walls

Marks on walls and painted surfaces

Baking Soda

Many ink spots; pencil, crayon or marker spots can be cleaned from painted surfaces using baking soda applied to a damp sponge. Rub gently, then wipe and rinse.

Stickers

Vinegar

Sponge vinegar over them several times, and wait 15 minutes, then rub off the stickers. This also works for price tags (stickers) on tools, etc.

Wallpaper Remover

Vinegar and Hot Water

Mix equal parts of white vinegar and hot water, apply with sponge over the old wallpaper to soften the adhesive. Open room windows or use a fan to dissipate the pungent vinegar smell.

Personal Care

Bath Soak

Add 1/2 cup of baking soda to your bath to neutralize acids on the skin and help wash away oil and perspiration, it also makes your skin feel very soft. Epsom salts are pretty miraculous for the bath too.

Deodorant

Pat baking soda onto your underarms to neutralize body odor

Facial Scrub and Body Exfoliant

Make a paste of 3 parts baking soda to 1 part water. Rub in a gentle circular motion to exfoliate the skin. Rinse clean. This is gentle enough for daily use.

Foot Soak

Dissolve 3 tablespoons of baking soda in a tub of warm water and soak feet. Gently scrub

Hair Care

For lustrous hair with more shine, keep brushes and combs clean. Remove natural oil build-up and hair product residue by soaking combs and brushes in a solution of 1 teaspoon of baking soda in a small basin of warm water. Rinse and allow to dry.

Itchy Skin and Insect Bites

Make a paste out of baking soda and water, and apply as a salve onto affected skin. To ease the itch, shake some baking soda into your hand and rub it into damp skin after bath or shower.

Mouthwash

Put one teaspoon of baking soda in half a glass of water, swish, spit and rinse. Odors are neutralized, not just covered up.

Oral Appliance Soak

Soak oral appliances, like retainers, mouthpieces, and dentures, in a solution of 2 teaspoons baking soda dissolved in a glass or small bowl of warm water. The baking soda loosens food particles and neutralizes odors to keep appliances fresh. You can also brush appliances clean using baking soda.

Toothpaste

Baking soda for brushing teeth: Instead of a toothpaste with chemical whiteners, dip wet toothbrush in baking soda, brush teeth, rinse, and then brush with toothpaste. Will naturally remove stains, whiten teeth and makes teeth feel extra clean.